

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 4 and 7 without prejudice or disclaimer; please amend claims 1, 5-9, 18, 25, 42 and 43 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A device for determining a depth of incision that extends from an epidermal layer to a blood vessel having a puncture, the device comprising: an elongated member including a distal end and a proximal end and a lumen extending between the proximal and distal ends, the lumen accommodating at least one extending member that enters the blood vessel through the puncture, the distal end having means for locating the blood vessel while comprising a tapered surface for receiving a portion of the blood vessel surrounding the puncture for impeding the distal end of the elongated member from entering the blood vessel.

2. (Original) The device according to Claim 1, wherein the elongated member has a constant outer diameter.

3. (Original) The device according to Claim 1, wherein the elongated member has an outer diameter which progressively decreases to a smaller outer diameter at the distal end.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim [4] 1, wherein the lumen is centered within the elongated member.

6. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim [4] 1, wherein the lumen is off-center along the longitudinal axis of the elongated member.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein the tapered surface at the distal end of the lumen has a substantially conic shape.

9. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 7 1, wherein the tapered surface at the distal end of the lumen has a substantially concave spherical shape.

10. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 7 1, wherein the tapered surface at the distal end of the lumen has a substantially stepped configuration.

11. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim [4] 1, wherein the outer diameter of the lumen at the distal end of the elongated member is about 50% to 99% of an outer diameter of the elongated member.

12. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim [4] 1, wherein the lumen at the distal end has a diameter of about .050 to .160 inches.

13. (Previously Presented) The device according to Claim 1, wherein the elongated member comprises a material with a hardness of at least 50D.

14. (Previously Presented) The device according to Claim 1, wherein a portion of the elongated member comprises a friction reducing material.

15. (Previously Presented) The device according to Claim 1, wherein the elongated member comprises a friction reducing material.

16. (Original) The device according to Claim 1, further comprising a depth indicating member positioned on an exterior of the elongated member and movable in an axial direction with respect to the elongated member.

17. (Original) The device according to Claim 16, wherein the depth indicating member is an elastic ring.

18. (Currently Amended) The device according to Claim 1, ~~wherein an~~ the extending control member extends ~~from a tapered surface and~~ beyond the distal end of the elongated member.

19. (Original) The device according to Claim 18, wherein the extending control member includes a proximal end, a distal end, and a lumen which extends from the proximal end to the distal end.

20 (Original) The device according to Claim 19, wherein the extending control member is configured to occlude and control a puncture in the blood vessel.

21. (Original) The device according to Claim 19, wherein the distal end of the extending member has at least one vent hole for allowing a fluid to enter the lumen of the extending member.

22. (Original) The device according to Claim 19, wherein the lumen of the extending member tapers from a first diameter at the proximal end to a second smaller diameter at the distal end.

23. (Original) The device according to Claim 19, wherein the extending member extends from the tapered surface of the device by about .10 to 6 inches.

24. (Original) The device according to Claim 19, wherein the extending member is formed from a flexible material to prevent the extending member from catching on subcutaneous tissue as the extending member advances through the patient's skin and tissue at the puncture site.

25. (Currently Amended) A device for determining a depth of an incision that extends from an epidermal layer to a blood vessel puncture site, the device comprising:

an elongated member having a distal end, a proximal end, and a lumen extending between the proximal and distal ends, the lumen accommodating at least one control member that enters the blood vessel, and means at the distal end including a tapered surface for locating the blood vessel puncture site by capturing an edge of the blood vessel puncture and for impeding entry of the distal end of the elongated member into the vessel;
and

a the control member extending from the distal end of the elongated member and configured to be received ~~in~~ through the puncture site.

26. (Original) The device according to Claim 25, further comprising a vent provided in the control member for venting fluid from the control member to the proximal end of the elongated member to provide an indication of location of the control member in the blood vessel.

27. (Original) The device according to Claim 25, wherein control member is tapered.

28. (Original) The device according to Claim 25, wherein the control member has a tapered lumen.

29. (Allowed) A method for determining a depth of an incision that extends from an epidermal layer to a puncture in a blood vessel, the method comprising the steps of:
introducing an elongated member through the incision, the elongated member having a proximal end, and a distal end configured for locating a blood vessel while preventing the distal end of the elongated member from entering the blood vessel; and locating the puncture in the blood vessel by receiving a portion of a wall of the blood vessel with the distal end.

30. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 29, wherein the elongated member is introduced over a guidewire into a tissue tract.

31. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 30, wherein the guidewire has a preselected stiffness to raise a portion of the wall of the blood vessel adjacent to the puncture.

32. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 30, wherein the guidewire directs the wall of the blood vessel to be received by the elongated member.

33. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 20, wherein the elongated member is introduced until an elastic recoil is produced by the blood vessel.

34. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 29, wherein the elastic recoil is felt by the operator of the elongated member.

35. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 29, wherein the elongated member has an end configuration at the tip of the distal end which catches an anterior proximal lip of the puncture site.

36. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 29, wherein an outer diameter of the elongated member is larger than a diameter of the puncture of the blood vessel.

37. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 29, wherein a depth indicating member which is slidably movable in a longitudinal direction on the elongated member is set to mark a depth of the puncture in the blood vessel.

38. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 29, further comprising a step of inserting a portion of an extending member into the blood vessel.

39. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 38, wherein the extending member at least partially occludes the puncture in the blood vessel wall.

40. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 38, wherein a fluid from the blood vessel enters the extending member.

41. (Allowed) The method for determining a depth of an incision according to Claim 40, wherein the fluid from the blood vessel entering the extending member provides visual feedback to the operator.

42. (Currently Amended) The method for determining a depth of an incision that extends from an epidermal layer to a puncture in a blood vessel, the method comprising the steps of:

introducing an elongated member through the incision, the elongated member comprising a distal end, proximal end and a lumen extending therebetween, the lumen accommodating at least one inner member that enters the puncture in the blood vessel;

providing visual feedback of a general location of the blood vessel puncture by venting blood through the elongated member; and

providing specific tactile feedback of a specific location of the blood vessel puncture by ~~contact between the elongated member and an exterior of~~ receiving an edge of the blood vessel surrounding the puncture in a tapered surface of the distal end of the elongated member which impedes entry of the elongated member through the puncture.

43. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 42, wherein the visual feedback is provided by a the control member at a distal end of the elongated member, the control member having a vent hole.